



RESEARCH PAPER

**Impact of Ecological Disasters in Pakistan from the Perspective of
Ecofeminism on Women's Physical and Mental Health**

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ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to study subcontinental fiction from the perspective of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism, according to various literary theorists, develops a nexus between plundering of the environment and marginalization of women by patriarchy. This connection has been endorsed by Ynestra King (1981); Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies (2014). It was discovered during the data collection process that women are more vulnerable than men in case of any catastrophic event. This research reveals the physical, psychological, social and economic vulnerability of women in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. This research, drawing on data, analyzes the interrelationship between natural disaster and its repercussions on women's health. The analysis revealed that the women characters were plundered by males, adding to their vulnerability. Additionally, in case of any ecological disaster, women's physical and mental health suffers more than men. Lastly, it was concluded that women's sufferings are not limited to their health but also take on a sociological and economic dimension in the wake of any natural calamity.

Introduction

Our world has witnessed ecological disasters as a result of global warming like earthquakes, cyclones, floods, torrential rains, melting of glaciers causing a rise in the sea levels resulting in endangering species and humanity. It has been observed from a Pakistani context in the past decade that men and women are biologically different and ecological hazards impact them differently. This article explores how Pakistani Anglophone fiction explores this inter-relationship of women-nature-health. The vulnerability will be limited to health i.e. physical and psychological. It further zooms in on what makes women more vulnerable as compared to their male counterparts and whether it is explored in works of Pakistani Anglophone fiction by using an ecofeminist theoretical framework.

Since Pakistan is a patriarchal society, it translates as males being ranked superior in the power dynamics. Everything revolves around male superiority and

women's issues being side-lined or ignored. Therefore, this paper attempts to illustrate the ways of vulnerability experienced by women, especially with regards to women's physical, emotional and psychological health. Later, it will be investigated if this reality is depicted in fiction or not? I would like to argue that women, health, and the environment, or for that matter literature, biological and environmental sciences will make this research interdisciplinary in nature.

I would like to start the discussion by mentioning that the above-mentioned interdisciplinary approach can be reviewed in Saba Pirzadeh's "socio-ecological degradation" that deals with the intricate relationship of human interactions and nature expressed through literature. The researcher used the trope "slow violence" to analyze air pollution and aquatic forms of environmental degradation leading up to social decline as expressed through Pakistani contemporary Anglophone literature. I gathered from the use of "slow violence" that it is a form probably inspired by pharmaceutical sciences as a form of specialized slow poison that paralyses the immune system and gradually leads to demise. Similarly, in environmental sciences, "slow poison" seems to be an inevitable climate change that is gradually leading humanity towards an apocalyptic end. This "slow violence" eventually makes the stakes rise even higher for all humanity, especially women in a Pakistani society due to the marginalized status in a patriarchal society accompanied by the physiological differences created by the Almighty.

When calamity strikes, both genders are inflicted with physical injuries accompanied by personal trauma which can be in the form of internal temporary displacement, loss of property or material possessions to being a witness to any tragic incident. Such instances inflict pain and suffering on people but what makes women more vulnerable is not only their physiological differences when tragedy strikes may cause miscarriages or other gynaecological complications. It has been documented in Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) that women are more severely malnourished than males in Pakistan. Women are more "Anaemic" as a figure of 52.1% is displayed on the website, owing to their natural hormonal issues that increase their chances of being at risk because of blood loss. This platform further sheds light on the factors affecting women's health because of maternal practices that result in decalcification of bones or "Osteoporosis" that contributes to more fractures and delayed healing. What is revealed through these results is that women are more at risk of physical injury in case of any environmental disaster.

In order to explore the emotional and psychological implications of any apocalyptic event that results in men, women and children to become internally displaced. Aleemi (2015) identified psychological problems in the internally displaced male, female and child victims. Causes such as stress, unhygienic living conditions of life in tents, poverty lead to psychological issues like trauma, P.T.S.D., anxiety, depression, etc. Although, women score higher on scale on physical injury graph but on the psychological scale, women fared better than males. The data consisted of 500 internally displaced persons, out of which, 200 were identified to be suffering from psychological issues. The gender wise breakup clears things up as "54 were male, 35 were women and 14 were children" (P. 7). It can be inferred from these results that although women are physically more vulnerable to environmental disasters but

psychologically, they seem to have strong nerves and suffering is not extended to psychological issues.

Another report "Women and Climate Change: Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security and Economic Development" by Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (2015), mentions the impact of natural calamities - drought, floods, extreme weather, increased incidence of diseases which have a direct impact on woman's health. It goes on to mention what puts women at risk in the face of natural disasters (P.7). This report further elaborates that although climate change impacts genders "but not equally" (P.9). It examines the gendered dimensions of rising sea levels leading to floods, waterborne diseases and internal displacement near coastal areas (P.9). It mentions that these factors further marginalize women that are exacerbated due to the environmental hazards. Ecofeminism takes into consideration the debates regarding deteriorating women's health and how hazards due to climate change like floods, monsoon rains etc. are directly proportional to each other. Moreover, when faced with any natural catastrophic event, these health issues lead to further complications for women. This article states that the "power dynamics" of both genders put women at a severe disadvantage as men lead the economic ladder in most societies (P.18). The paper attempts to explore how women's vulnerability is further increased because of any natural hazard for example, flooding. They are more susceptible to various forms of harassment such as "mental torture" which impairs their psychological health, "verbal abuse" targets their emotional health whereas, and "domestic abuse" impacts their physical health - in case of natural disasters (P.22). This paper attempts to observe these factors that adversely affect women's health in the wake of climate change presented in Pakistani fiction.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework of the Study

Since ecofeminism evolved out of movement regarding protection of environment and women emancipation. Ynestra King defined ecofeminism as the movement about the ecology, environment, women rights and how they are interlinked with one another (P.18). Taking my inspiration from her idea, my stance is that women are portrayed as protectors, nurturers of nature whereas males plunder nature. Society has laid the burden of protecting the environment solely on females whereas males are associated with culture. In this way, a society prioritizes culture over nature. Women are also considered inferior to males and as various crucial issues regarding women are side-lined similarly; nature is also neglected as women. While reviewing her article entitled "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology", tries to draw parallels in the way males treat women is reflected in the way they treat nature (P. 18). King then goes on to define "social ecology" as a nexus between the biological aspects of the society and the environment (P.19). She goes on to blame the misogyny as the root cause of all the ecofeminist problems. Misogyny refers to the centuries old practices that alienate women and considers them as inferior. Furthermore, industrialization and technological advancements were considered to be a "man's world" (P.19). Women were shunned rather than encouraged to proceed the corporate ladder. It is a miracle that women progressed as she rarely had any encouragement from their male counterparts. It has been observed that in patriarchal societies women's nature were objectified and considered as the

“Other” (P 20). Both were considered as objects to be manipulated and subjugated as proof of the male dominance. The opinion of women was never validated as worthy of consideration. This is where Sherry B. Ortner steps in to fill in the gaps through her work.

As mentioned above, a similar argument has been stated by Sherry B. Ortner. She seems to be of this view that women are portrayed as inferior beings when compared with males. Her essay “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” sought to explore the subjugation of women in society. In the essay Ortner draws the debate that women are more in sync with nature as they perform nurturing roles like mothers, nurturers, caregivers, etc. which aligns them with nature (P. 9). She seems to come up with this notion that it is the male who plunders everything, from nature to women and children. Ortner seems to be of this view that males commit such acts in order to prove their dominance and power. Whereas women are of secondary status in society is one universal: “a pan cultural fact” (P.9). This entire notion is a construct of culture rather than a fact of nature. Women, “in reality” are not any closer (or further) to nature than males. Both genders are blessed with consciousness, both are mortal beings, and have an equal level of responsibility towards protecting the environment. She points out that since society views women as the sole protectors of the “mother earth” there is an immense burden on women. The earth belongs to everyone living on this planet. That is why the responsibility must be shared by both genders. This will result in a more balanced approach towards women's emancipation and environmental protection. Sherry Ortner was one of the pioneers to talk about the dichotomy of ideas about females being aligned with nature and men with culture. Taking the discussion forward, cultural ideologies need to be reviewed globally as until a resolution is made regarding viewing women as aligned with nature, nothing will change. She linked these dichotomies together to make people grasp that linking women to nature while males with culture in turn makes women inferior than males as culture is considered superior than nature. This notion needs to change if we want to bring about a positive revolution about women emancipation and environmental protection. She seems to be of the view that “Ultimately, both men and women can and must be equally involved in projects of creativity and transcendence. Only then will women be seen as aligned with culture, in culture's ongoing dialectic with nature” (P.10). To further discuss this point.

Vandana Shiva is basically an environmental and women rights activist. She is also famous for starting a movement in India called the “Chipko Movement” Vandana Shiva argues that women are more vulnerable to natural catastrophes as compared with males. Furthermore, women were considered inferior creatures and males try to subjugate them just as they exploit the environment.

Vandana Shiva’s article “Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development.” states that a capitalist society is a male dominant society and does not support females. Various technological developments refuse to encourage women to raise the corporate ladder. In this article, Shiva mentions the “Chipko Movement” as in Northern States, women began this movement to put a stop to deforestation from the Capitalists (P 42). Shiva’s work came under criticism from Eco feminists as they pointed that this debate brings women back to square one as people who oppose ecofeminism movement reiterate Shiva’s perspective that women are more inclined towards nature. Later on,

Vandana Shiva changed stance that it is a cultural association of women with nature and has nothing to do with scientific development. "The privileged access of women to the sustaining principle thus has had a historical and cultural, and not merely a biological, basis" (P. 42). My argument is that even culturally, women should not be solely responsible for protecting the environment.

Bina Agarwal in her article "The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India. Feminist Studies" criticizes Vandana Shiva for associating women with environment and points that we connect environment completely with women and "we need to disregard this notion of positing between nature and women" as there is no "gender specificity" and both genders have to play a positive role for protecting the environment. This relates with the argument that I am trying to put forward that it is high time that women must be burdened from being environmental protectors and males must positively contribute towards protecting the environment.

I find that the common stream is that the majority associate females with nature and in turn as further burdened women with the added responsibility of protecting the environment. In the words of Bina Agarwal: "We don't need environmentalist feminism; we need feminist environmentalism". What the term "feminist environmentalism" means to me as a female is that both genders have in general are related equally to nature and therefore both genders should be equally serious to protect the environment (Agarwal, 1992:127) Many ecofeminists seem to be of this view that this connection between environment and women must now be severed as it adds added pressure on women and it completely disregards the responsibility of males. This is where it coincides with the argument that I want to highlight that women must be emancipated from the burden of saving the environment and the discussion must move towards "equal pay for equal work" and similar issues.

Material and Methods

The methodology employed in this paper is qualitative in nature. This research draws upon ecofeminist lens as a primary theoretical framework to investigate hazardous impact of environment on women's health. This research focuses on the interrelationship between environment and women (Ynestra, p.xviii).

Analysis of the Hungry Tide

This study is delimited to sub continental fiction entitled "*The Hungry Tide*" by Amitav Ghosh. The writer is an eminent postcolonial environmental fictionist (Post-colonial Environments). Since Amitav Ghosh is a post-colonial writer who talks about the environmental disasters in his writings, the researcher will apply an ecofeminist framework to analyse the major and minor female characters in the selected text. This fiction is set in the "Sundarbans" or "beautiful forest" area comprising small islands where the natural habitat is beset with wilderness, tigers, reptiles, dolphins, mangroves and tides" (Ghosh, 2014, 8). "*The Hungry Tide*" as an anthology by Pablo Mukherjee succinctly tells a tale within a tale of turbulent incident of the "Marichjhapi massacre of 1979" (Ghosh, 2014, 110). This text reveals the crucial plight of the poor

and widowed women looking for jobs get lured into human trafficking, political ideological stance such as promoting an egalitarian society by S'Daniel in a fictional setting "Lusibari" (Ghosh, 2014, 51).

Ecofeminist stance will help explore the ebb and flow of the historical chronicling of the plight of the Bangladeshi migrants and trace the vulnerability of the women as they are left on their own devices to provide for the family after the demise of their spouses due to tidal flow or an attack by the wild life in the region. It will also explore the difference in the vantage points of Kusum, Piya, Nilima and Moyna due to their experiences and worldview. The analysis will take its cue from the data regarding the vulnerability of women because of environmental issues and focus will be on the female characters from the perspective of their health, which is delimited into four categories, namely, physical vulnerability, mental vulnerability, social vulnerability and economic vulnerability. This study is grounded in eco feminist theoretical framework and will focus on the inter relationship of women and environment. Moreover, the instances where women's physical health suffered because of exposure to the tide and the animals are more than the psychological ones. Whereas social and economic concerns further increased their vulnerabilities.

Physical Vulnerability

Subjugation of women is as old as patriarchy and forms a nexus with their physical, social, mental and economic vulnerability. Ecofeminists across the globe link climate change to female vulnerability and seek to emancipate women (Shiva, Mies; Raquelyn, Gaard). This research encapsulates the derogatory impact of climate change that makes women more vulnerable (Raquelyn, 2015; P.75). In the selected text, Nilima Bose revolutionized the Lusibari community and environment by mobilizing women like Kusum and Moyna (Ghosh, Raquelyn). Similarly, this research develops a nexus between women subjugation by linking climate change that increases their vulnerability (Shiva, Mies; Raquelyn).

Initially, when Nilima moved to the Lusibari, she experienced severe vulnerability because of the physical vision impairment. Therefore, a menial task like tying the mosquito net to the poles of the bed increased the physical precariousness. This happened when an "extremely venomous arboreal snake" hit across the palm and exposed her to the perils of residing in Lusibari and inflicted mental trauma upon her person, thus increasing the precariousness of the situation (Ghosh, P. 89). Another incident that explores the physical vulnerability due to nature is narrated in the text when a cyclone accompanied by a flood wreaked havoc on the Lusibari community. Nilima was safe in the room when Kanai Babu, her nephew, knocked to seek refuge from the natural catastrophe. The forceful power of the wind knocked her off as she banged against a wall. The physical shock accompanied by the falling of files from the shelves hit Nilima and increased her precarity as she physically staggered backwards against a wall and as a result, her wrist got hurt (Ghosh, P. 384).

Piya is a strong and determined woman who seems excited to observe the dolphins found in Sundarbans. For this survey, Piyali was assaulted by a guard (Ghosh, P.54). The entire incident highlights the physical precarity experienced by

Piya. It was an experience which haunted Piya even after she returned to Lusibari (Ghosh, P.194).

Additionally, the analysis will trace the physical vulnerability faced by Kusum when confronted with the environment surrounding the areas. Kusum arrived in Lusibari, a fictional land created by the writer to chronicle the events surrounding the true incident of Marichjhapi, a place under the protection of a reserved forest act to protect the wild tigers (Mallick, Monica, Deep). She arrived in Lusibari as a refugee and attended meetings of Lusibari's Women Union in 1970 (Ghosh, P. 89). At the first encounter, her character was bald because of "Typhoid" which can occur because of consuming contaminated water or food (Ghosh, P. 90). The precarity added to the vulnerabilities in the tide country by inflicting the women with the physical health hazards. Another incident that chronicles the vulnerability of Kusum was the one that led to the events of the "Marichjhapi massacre" of 1979. Since Lusibari converted into a reserve for the tigers and the refugees were threatening the environment, hence deprived of food and other utilities by the government and the police under the guise of protecting the tigers (Mallick, 2013, P. 104). Kusum ate a wild green called "Jadu Palong" found in Marichjhapi to survive. However, in an already malnourished state it induced side effects of a dysentery that increased the physical precariousness of Kusum (Ghosh, P. 261). Similar nexus was explored between the climate change, malnutrition and women health.

Furthermore, Piyali appeared engrossed in recording the measurements of water via the GPS system and measuring devices that she never noticed a crocodile preying for her arm (Ghosh, P.174). This increased her precariousness as it exposed her to a wild reptilian and increased chances of mortal precarity (Ghosh, P.175). Later on, in Lusibari, when Piya recalled the incident panic gripped her senses and made her realize her own vulnerability. Another incident that increased the physical precariousness of the protagonist was when a cyclone hit the tide country, and Piya and Fokir sought shelter in the mangroves, which placed them in mortal peril (Ghosh, P. 376). While they were hanging for their lives, a tiger spotted them and made Piya feel the intensity of double precarity as two forces of nature; the cyclone and the tiger seemed to work against them (Ghosh, P.378; Mallick). In all this complicated vulnerability, some other force of nature struck Fokir and he experienced a tragic demise at the hands of nature (Ghosh, P. 378). When tragedy struck; Piya was going through a combination of physical and psychological traumatic ecoprecarity, because of the cyclone, tiger's approach and Fokir's demise. Hence, women are more vulnerable in face of climate change (Raquelyn, 2015; P.75).

Psychological Vulnerability

Nilima Bose is an extremely pragmatic and well-respected woman in Lusibari due to her contribution in women's health care hospital and a women's welfare trust. The text explores a few incidents about the interaction with her nature or wildlife. At the very beginning, Nilima was widowed when she lost Nirmal to Pneumonia, which occurred by interacting with torrential rain. It affected the respiratory system at a mature age and led to the eventual demise during the infamous Marichjhapi massacre incident. This entire event left a long-lasting impact on Nilima's psyche, as even

decades after the demise, she seems unable to heal from the traumatic incident and this increases her psychological precarity (Ghosh, P. 25; Azeemi). A woman, without her husband is considered vulnerable to economic, social and physical issues and makes her feel unsafe in a society.

Kusum's character is one of the strongest and wilful refugees in the area. To link Kusum's vulnerability as a consequence of her interactions with the environment can also be analysed through the lens of "spectacular and slow violence" (Nixon, P.6). What can be inferred is that the violence inflicted by environmental issues on female characters. The *Hungry Tide* explores instances of violence wrought upon women by the environmental hazards. Women face perilous conditions because of the eco precarity that exacerbates their psychological health (Nayar, P.42). Climate change has a far-reaching impact on mental health has been illustrated in another article (Hayes, et al). Kusum narrates an incident during the stage performance called "The Glory of Bon Bibi" in Lusibari (Ghosh, P.101; Azeemi). It points to the fact that traumatic incidents leave a long-lasting impact on the memories and need to be treated. Hayes, et al (2018), supports this view. Several years after the incident, Kusum could not come to terms with the loss of her father; an incident, which exacerbated the vulnerability of Kusum and her mother. In an island called "Satjelia" where her father sailed to the end of the "reserve for tigers" to retrieve wood to make fuel for the food. The first environmental hazard was that the wind blew against the tide, making it impossible for the cries to reach out the far end of the forest. The second was that a "bagh" or a tiger preyed on Kusum's father (Ghosh, P.108). Spectacular violence illuminated in a tiger's attack on Kusum's father (Nixon, P.6). As other researchers (Debdatta, Suswagata, Azeemi) record similar events in their work. This incident increased their vulnerability in the man's world as the mother and Kusum had to fend for themselves, increasing their social and economic precarity (Nayar, P.42). It has been reported that the patriarchal society is unsafe for women and adds to their vulnerability (Debdatta, Suswagata, Azeemi).

Moyna learnt through Piya about the unfortunate death of Fokir (Ghosh, P.391). After learning of this news, she pounded her bangles as practiced by a widow. While experiencing the extreme precariousness of the situation; a glass bangle, which is a symbol of marriage, broke and physically made her vulnerable as a shard of glass hurt her temple and bled (Ghosh, P.392). So, it can be stated that Moyna experienced both mental and physical precarity, simultaneously as the bleeding of the temple can be figuratively an indication of the mental trauma and precarity of Moyna's and Tutul uncertain future because of Fokir's death. Nilima observed the mental representation of the precarity from the state of "Redness in the eyes" which reflected the status of being widowed and its psychological impact on Moyna (Ghosh, P.394). Moyna was concerned about her son's future education possibilities, survival in a man's world and economic concerns.

Piya witnessed the harrowing incident of burning a "man eating tiger" responsible for consuming two men and a cow and goat (Ghosh, P.294). The deep ecological patriotism felt by Piya made her protest this act as to her, the tiger was worth saving (Ghosh, P.295). Similar observations have been made by another researcher (Monica). This event made her feel psychologically precarious as it was a traumatic experience for Piya. Equivalent analysis of Piya was conducted by other

researchers (Suswagata, P. 56; Azeemi). Nilima observed the deep psychological precarity of Piya's symptoms, which resulted in a stoic form, expressionless demeanour because of the survivor's guilt also discussed in a research paper about mental health and climate change (Hayes, et al. 2018).

Social Vulnerability

An incident about the social vulnerability of Kusum and her mother was that Kusum's mother fell prey to a character named "Dilip" who got her involved in human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution in area called "Dhanbad" (Ghosh, P.163). For this purpose, I would like to bring the focus towards my understanding and area of interest regarding ecofeminism. Ynestra King defined ecofeminism as the movement about the ecology, environment, women rights and vis-à-vis interlinked with one another (P.18). Taking my inspiration from her idea, my stance is that women are the protectors, nurturers of nature whereas males plunder nature and women. Just as "Dilip" plundered many women, including Kusum's mother. People like Dilip commodify women and nature as they consider themselves superior and women are marginalized. Kusum went through the traumatic experience of searching frantically for the mother, only to find her in the worst possible malnourished state which affected her not only physically, but also further impacted her mental health, soon after the death of her husband. Experiencing all this, Kusum was shocked by discovering her mother in such a deplorable state and being helpless. However, Rajan, the person who helped Kusum locate her mother, married Kusum and gave them refuge. The physical health of the mother declined to such an extent, which added to the precariousness so that she could only survive for three more months after the rescue (Ghosh, P.164, 2005).

Ynestra King defines "social ecology" as a nexus between the biological aspects of the society and the environment (P.19). She goes on to blame the misogyny as the root cause of all the ecofeminist problems. Misogyny refers to the century's old practices that alienate women and considers them inferior. Kusum had Rajan's support for four years; however, she lost him in a tragic rail accident and had to fend for herself and Fokir. All these unfortunate losses contributed to the psychological trauma of Kusum. A dramatic performance brought back the traumatic memories of people she lost. All these incidents add to the vulnerability that severely affected her physical and mental health (Ghosh, P.163). Moyna was mostly on her own whenever Fokir went on prolonged fishing trips. During these times, Moyna was vulnerable to the lecherous intentions of people. Kanai Babu pursued Moyna. She figured out his mal-intent and figured out that he pursued all women in a similar manner. Globally, women experience such unpleasant advances as experienced by Moyna that increases their vulnerability (Mallick; Chowdhury; Suswagata). Women are subjugated and considered as a commodity, and it makes women more vulnerable.

Economic Vulnerability

Sonalini Sapra views women oppression as linked with material power. Since time immemorial, men are the bread earners while the women are the home markers (P 2). Moyna Mandol is an intelligent, strong, determined Nurse in training who

gained education and resides in the quarters provided for the hospital staff with her husband Fokir and son. She is often annoyed when Fokir takes Tutul along for fishing trips. She seemed extremely cross with Kannai Babu because he left Piya and Fokir at the mercy of a cyclone and flood (Ghosh, P.380). She realized the consequences of such a catastrophe. As it happens, all her concerns materialized because of Fokir's death (Nayar, P.42). Women face physical, mental and economic precarity upon facing such consequences as explored by researchers (Suswagata; Azeemi).

Discussion

Amitav Ghosh, in one of the conference presentations stated that the negative impact of environmental disasters is explored in the deteriorating conditions of people in places like the Sundarbans (2015). The geological impact of global warming unfolds in the cyclical processes of disasters that impact women's health. As it was traced in the analysis that women's predicament was of the physical, mental, social and economic vulnerability due to the environmental disasters. The accelerating impact of global warming like floods, cyclones and wildlife threatens the women as observed in the text. All these events increase the eco precarity in women due to rapid climate change (Nayar, P.42). Physical predicament of women including the onset of disease or injury because of interaction with wildlife was observed in the women characters. Mental vulnerability like traumatic experiences of loss of a loved one to encounter with a reptile and a tiger in the text. Social precarity involved taken advantage of because of the gender, as Kusum's mother was involved in human trafficking and prostitution. Economic vulnerability occurred because of loss of the breadwinner. It negatively affected women's health as they experienced stress and exploitation by patriarchy. To quote Amitav Ghosh, it also increased the "catastrophozoic" impact on the women as they not only suffered physically, psychologically, but also went through social and economic constraints that further impacted their vulnerability (2015).

Conclusion

This research enlightened the nexus between women's vulnerability in the wake of any natural calamity and the women/nature subjugation by men in the society. The text revealed that even today women are being marginalized by patriarchy. *The Hungry Tide* illuminates in many instances the physical, mental, social and economic vulnerabilities of women in the wake of any environmental disaster like flood and cyclone. Water and food contamination made women physically vulnerable to water borne diseases. Global warming has caused rise in sea level making women residing near sea more physically vulnerable to natural disasters as noticed in case of flood and cyclone. To conclude, the research also highlighted the mental vulnerability of women in wake of any catastrophic event after witnessing any traumatic event, P.T.S.D., or survivor's guilt. Women are socially vulnerable to being subjugated by patriarchy as Kusum's mother and Moyna were plundered by Dilip and Kanai Babu in the text. Greta Gaard seems to be of this view that such exploitations are done under the mask of helping out (P 61, 2017). Both characters were exploited in the guise of help. This plundering of women and the environment highlights the ecofeminist ideology in the text. The research voices the physical, mental, social and economic vulnerabilities faced by women due to environmental disasters. It takes on

circumstances leading to various forms of women's vulnerability encompassing environmental calamity.

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